**Telemedicine programme in remote areas**

*330. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plan to extend the telemedicine programme to the remote corners of the country to reach out to the poor;

(b) whether Government would subsidize the programme for the BPL families;

(c) whether Government would exploit the programme to its full potential; and

(d) if so, by when and the budgetary/financial provisions for the same for the next year?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) to (d) Telemedicine is a new medium for providing medical services to the people living in rural India. So far the Department of Space, Department of Information Technology, AIIMS, New Delhi, SGPGI, Lucknow, PGIMER, Chandigarh and some of the private corporate hospitals like Apollo group of hospitals, Narayana Hirudayalya, Bangalore etc. have taken initiatives to launch projects linking major hospitals to far flung areas such as North Eastern States, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Leh etc. The connectivity is being provided by the Department of Space through satellite and by Department of Information Technology and Department of Communication through terrestrial lines.

In the years to come, Government is keen to exploit the full potential of this developing technology.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has constituted a national Task Force for Telemedicine under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Health & FW) to examine possibilities and areas for application of telemedicine.

The Planning Commission has also constituted a Working Group under the Chairmanship of Director General of Health Services to formulate proposals for providing Hospital Information Management System and telemedicine facilities during Eleventh Five Year Plan.

ONCONET INDIA is a telemedicine network at an outlay of

Rs.9.5 crores, which is proposed to be implemented. Under this programme, all the 25 Regional Cancer Centres will be linked with four secondary level hospitals each in their respective regions, so as to offer tele-consultation.

It is also proposed to network all the nine telemedicine centers in North East and offer teleconsultation to hospitals in remote locations in North East.

Tele-communication services are intended to reduce patient costs and to offer them free in Government hospitals for BPL families.

Budgetary provisions for the next year will be finalized towards the end of the year depending upon projects identified for implementation.

**Ill-effects of improper medicines**

†*331. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that millions of people in our country are affected every year by taking improper medicines;

(b) whether the Heart Care Foundation of India has also drawn the attention of Government in this regard in one of its reports; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) to (c) As per information available, the Heart Care Foundation of India in one of its reports published in the bulletin of Delhi Medical Association has reported that millions of people in the country are affected every year due to use of improper medicines. However, a copy of the report was not submitted to Government of India by the Heart Care Foundation of India.

In its report, the Heart Care Foundation has primarily reported about the adverse reactions and deaths due to improper use of drugs and lack of proper precautionary measures in hospital care etc. It has been, further, stated that 80% of adverse drug reactions are related to medical prescriptions and medical errors due to look alike drugs etc.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.